

## **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support:**

We have seen an increase in distress in young people, specifically 10 to 16 who are feeling socially isolated and may be struggling with conflict or relationship difficulties at home. In addition, we know that young people who display behaviours associated with neurodevelopment conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or ADHD are likely to find it more difficult to recognise their distress and access support associated with their wellbeing.

Action is being taken across schools, health services and social care to try to identify young people who may be particularly vulnerable to emotional distress at this time. However, we would like to draw your attention to a range of support available to young people and their families. ***Please can you directly message your young people and their families with these resources that they can access themselves.***

If families or children are not sure what support is needed, then they can call the Single Point of Access (SPA) on 0300 123 4496 to talk through what information, advice and support might be appropriate. This is also the number to call if a child needs urgent mental health support.

For people of all ages needing immediate mental health support, just text the word "Kent" or "Medway" to 85258. This is a new 24/7 text service provided by SHOUT and the Crisis Text Line as part of the Kent and Medway Release the Pressure campaign.

Other services that young people can access directly are:

- **Kooth** is a mental health and wellbeing online platform for young people aged 10 to 16 across the whole of Kent. The service is free and can be accessed at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com). It's a place to get advice, information and support 24/7. Young people can chat to a friendly qualified counsellor Monday to Friday between 12 noon and 10pm and Saturday and Sunday between 6pm and 10pm.
- Accessing [www.moodspark.org.uk](http://www.moodspark.org.uk) or [www.kentresiliencehub.org.uk](http://www.kentresiliencehub.org.uk) to learn about mental health and find tips and resources to keep emotionally healthy.
- Texting **ChatHealth** for support around physical and mental health on 07520 618850. The number is monitored Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Self-referring to the **Children and Young People's Counselling Service** at [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/forms/school-health-service-referral-form](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/forms/school-health-service-referral-form)
- Accessing the **Big White Wall** if aged 16+ for anonymous support through <https://www.bigwhitewall.com>

School is a place where most young people feel safe and secure. Your staff are a trusted source of information and support and that is why your role in supporting their mental health is so important during this pandemic. Please support us in reaching out to the children and young people of Kent. Thank you for everything you do to support our county's children and young people.